

through medical malpractice. Although proponents of H.R. 5 contend that the bill will limit frivolous lawsuits, I believe it will not do so; instead, this provision would arbitrarily cap meritorious claims of malpractice.

I ask my colleagues: if we trust our jury system to make decisions about life and death, I believe we must be able to trust that jury system to make decisions about money.

The increase in malpractice rates is a huge problem for doctors and hospitals, and that is why I wish this bill had been crafted with input from the leaders of both parties. At the least, I wish we had the benefit of an open rule that would allow real debate here on the floor. I will not support this bill because I think it fails to prevent frivolous lawsuits, fails to address the problems with the insurance industry, and fails to provide direct relief to communities that are struggling with access problems resulting from high malpractice rates.

**PROCLAMATION—POLICE-FIRE
MERGER PLATINUM ANNIVER-
SARY, KALAMAZOO DEPART-
MENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. In 1983, it was determined that the combination of Kalamazoo police and fire services could serve as an effective method of providing more efficient and productive use of resources and employees. By cross-training personnel in both disciplines, the fire department's 164 firefighters and the police department's 219 law enforcement positions were consolidated into 383 multifunctional employees. This streamlining provided an excellent public safety service to the community while minimizing expenses. The Department of Public Safety has continued to evolve and improve since its inception—forming specialty units and services and using state of the art technology. Today, the department is the largest public safety organization in the country, with 315 highly trained and educated employees, and 2003 marks the 20th year of these combined police and fire services. I wish them many more years of continued success.

**RECOGNIZING MR. RONALD J.
RUFFENACH**

HON. CHET EDWARDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Ronald J. Ruffennach for his many years of hard work, initiative and dedication to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and our Nation.

Ron has served the Corps for 30 years. His career encompasses working in the Pittsburgh District, Europe, and the Savannah District before transferring to the Southwestern Division's Fort Worth District Office in 1984. During his career, he has been called upon to accomplish many significant projects for the Corps of Engineers.

Ron is recognized as a leader and expert in the Corps' Public Affairs community. He has often been sought out to provide valuable public relations expertise during disaster recovery efforts. His expertise was invaluable in 1989 following Hurricane Hugo in South Carolina and the earthquake in northern California; in 1991, when he was assigned to the Defense Reconstruction Assistance Office during the Kuwait Recovery; and in 1993 when he was called to the Corps' Civil Works Forward Office following the Midwest flood event.

While in the Fort Worth District, Ron's unique and selfless dedication, as the Chief of Public Affairs and Legislative Affairs, is instrumental in building partnerships and achieving consensus on many important projects in the State of Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and beyond. My staff and I have personally called upon Ron to assist us in obtaining valuable assistance on projects in my district and throughout the State of Texas.

In the community, Ron has been a trusted and well-known leader and public servant. He is a 1993 graduate of Leadership Fort Worth, and an active member of the St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Church, where he is a Eucharistic Minister and an active member of the Men's Club. He served as a past president of the Boy's Select Soccer Club, past president of the Martin High School Soccer Booster Club and was active in local school board issues. He also was a regular volunteer at the Arlington night shelter.

Over the past few years, Ron has experienced serious health issues. However, not once during that period did Ron's commitment to the nation, the Corps of Engineers, and his family waiver.

I know that you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the subcommittee would like to join me in thanking Mr. Ronald J. Ruffennach for his long, dedicated, and faithful service to the nation, the Army, and to this committee. Thanks Ron.

**IN HONOR OF SAINT WENDELIN
PARISH**

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the parish community of Saint Wendelin Church, as they celebrate one hundred years of healing and hope in Cleveland's Ohio City neighborhood. Throughout the past century, Saint Wendelin's has served as a spiritual refuge, opening its doors to any soul in search of guidance and peace.

The ministry of Saint Wendelin's began in 1903, originally serving the Slovak community of Cleveland's near west side. On May 3rd of that same year, the community received permission to found Saint Wendelin Parish. A small church was soon constructed and on December 6, 1903, Father Koudelka celebrated Saint Wendelin's first mass. Not long after, the Sisters of Notre Dame established Saint Wendelin's School. The order would continue to provide quality Catholic education for the next seventy years.

In 1925, the current church and school complex was dedicated. Always reaching outward, Saint Wendelin's welcomes all believers to join

in worship. It is a testament to the Saint Wendelin ministry that Catholics from all corners of the city heed the call to celebrate at the little church on Columbus Avenue.

Cleveland's vital tradition of Catholic education is reflected at Saint Wendelin's with their active participation in the Urban Community School. Saint Wendelin's facilities serve as a second home to over 300 students of Urban Community School.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of every member of Saint Wendelin Church, and its leaders—Pastor Jerome Lajack and Deacon James J. Armstrong, as they celebrate mass with Bishop Anthony Pilla in commemoration of one hundred years of service to God and community. Saint Wendelin parish continues its dedication to social justice and spiritual healing—within the neighborhoods of Ohio City, and the world community beyond.

**IN RECOGNITION OF DOMINIC
POLIMENI WHO RETIRES AFTER
13 YEARS OF DEDICATED AND
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AS
CITY COUNCIL MEMBER FOR THE
CITY OF SAN GABRIEL**

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dominic Polimeni who will retire from the San Gabriel City Council after 13 years of service to the city and community.

Born May 23, 1940, in Dunmore, PA, Dominic Polimeni was raised and educated in Buffalo, NY. He attended the University of Buffalo and graduated from Bryant and Stratton Business Institute. A 31-year resident of San Gabriel, Mayor Polimeni was elected to the San Gabriel City Council in April, 1990.

Reflecting a team spirit approach and courteous respect for others, Mayor Polimeni's example encouraged a cohesive city council whose collective objective is to put San Gabriel first in order to accomplish community and regional goals.

Dominic Polimeni's city council highlights include building municipal economic reserves, creation of an Economic Redevelopment Agency, revitalization of the historic San Gabriel Mission District, implementation of the \$5 million Millennium Miles Program to rehabilitate San Gabriel's streets, seismic and ADA retrofitting of City Hall, restoration of the legendary San Gabriel Civic Auditorium, the three-acre Smith Park Expansion Project, created ordinances and supported public safety and other department programs to improve the quality of life for San Gabriel residents.

An active member of the San Gabriel community, he has supported and participated in the creation of exciting, fun-filled programs and events to educate and communicate the unique story that is San Gabriel and celebrate San Gabriel's diversity such as the Alhambra-San Gabriel Lunar New Year Parade and Festival, Christmas in April, Three-day San Gabriel Birthday & Festival, California History Day, Mission District Mercado, National Night Out, and Kids Day.

Dominic Polimeni retired from the County of Los Angeles as Administrator of Alhambra Municipal Court in 1996 after a distinguished career spanning 36 years. Mayor Polimeni and

his wife Barbara, will celebrate 39 years of marriage this year, and have three children and five grandchildren.

I ask all Members of Congress to join me today in congratulating Dominic Polimeni on a truly exemplary professional and public service career, and for his dedication and unwavering commitment to the city of San Gabriel.

ERITREA: A FRIEND THAT DESERVES RECOGNITION

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the small nation of Eritrea occupies a very strategic location on the coast of the Red Sea. This is an area that is and will continue to be very important to our country's security interests. Fortunately, Eritrea is a stable, reliable friend of the United States. Practically alone in its region and in its continent of Africa, Eritrea is developing a democratic, accountable, and responsible government.

I have been privileged to know many of Eritrea's leaders, since the time that they were freedom fighters struggling against the communist Mengistu regime in Ethiopia. Over all these years, they have been consistent in advocating, and implementing decent values. I am especially gratified that Eritrea is one of the countries standing shoulder to shoulder with us now in the "Coalition of the Willing". I might add that they are one of only two countries in all of Africa to do so.

I would like to insert into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an excerpt of an article written by Robert Kaplan, which appeared in the April issue of the Atlantic monthly and focuses on Eritrea. I commend this article to all my colleagues in Congress who want to know which countries of the world are deserving of the label "U.S. ally" and worthy of American support.

ERITREA

On the Horn of Africa, just a forty-five-minute flight from Yemen, across the Red Sea choke point of the Bab el Mandeb ("The Gate of Lament"), is the newly independent, sleepily calm, and remarkably stable state of Eritrea. While the West promotes democracy, market liberalization, military demobilization, and the muting of ethnic hatreds as necessary to domestic tranquility, Eritrea, at least for the moment, provides a rejoinder to all that. The country has achieved a degree of non-coercive social discipline and efficiency enviable in the developing world and particularly in Africa—and it has done so by ignoring the West's advice on democracy and development, by cultivating a sometimes obsessive and narcissistic dislike of its neighbors, and by not demobilizing its vast army, built up during a thirty-year conflict with Ethiopia, unless there are jobs waiting for the troops.

Whereas Yemen's streets and shops are plastered with photos of President Saleh (whose cult of personality is mild compared with those of other Arab and African leaders), one never sees such photos of the Eritrean President, Isaias Afewerki, the veritable founder of this country. For decades Afewerki led a low-intensity guerrilla movement that finally wrested independence from Ethiopia in 1991. "Photos of me would create an air of mystery and distance from

the people," he told me in December. "It's the lack of photos that liberates you. I hate high walls and armed guards." While other leaders in the region live inside forbidding military compounds, Afewerki lives in a modest suburban-style house and greets people in his secretary's office, which sits at the end of an undistinguished corridor. He moves around the capital in the passenger seat of a four-wheel-drive vehicle, with only one escort car, stopping at red lights. Western diplomats here say they have seen him disappear into large crowds of Eritreans without any security detail at all. "It's easy to put a bullet in him, and he knows it," one foreign diplomat said to me.

Security, which consumes the Western diplomatic and aid communities in Sana'a (and everywhere else in the Middle East), is barely an issue in Asmara, Eritrea's capital. Despite its tattered storefronts, Asmara not only is one of the cleanest capital cities in Africa but also may be the only capital south of the Sahara where one can leave the car doors unlocked or prowl the back streets at all hours without fear of being robbed, even though the police are barely in evidence. American, Israeli, and other resident diplomats and aid administrators in Eritrea move freely around the country without guards or other escorts, as if they were at home.

Desperately poor and drought-stricken, with almost three quarters of its 3.5 million inhabitants illiterate, Eritrea nonetheless has a surprisingly functional social order. Women run shops, restaurants, and hotels; handicapped people have shiny new crutches and wheelchairs; people drive slowly and even attend driving school; scrap-metal junkyards are restricted to the urban outskirts; receipts are given for every transaction; there are few electricity blackouts from sloppy maintenance or badly managed energy resources. Foreign diplomats in Asmara praise the country's lack of corruption and its effective implementation of aid projects. Whereas rural health clinics in much of Africa have empty shelves and unexplained shortages of supplies, clinic managers in Eritrea keep ledgers documenting where all the medicine is going.

An immense fish farm near the port of Massawa testifies to Eritrea's ability to utilize foreign aid and know-how. The 1,500-acre complex channels salt water from the Red Sea, purifies it, and then uses it to raise shrimp in scores of circular cement tanks. The nutrient-rich excess of that process is used for breeding tilapia, a freshwater fish. The remaining waste water is pumped into asparagus and mangrove fields and artificially created wetlands. Though the operation was initially overseen by a firm from Phoenix, Arizona, and for a time employed an Israeli consultant, the consultant is now only rarely used. The Eritreans themselves run the operation in every respect.

Such initiative and communal discipline are the result of an almost Maoist degree of mobilization and an almost Albanian degree of xenophobia—but without the epic scale of repression and ideological indoctrination that once characterized China and Albania. The Eritrean xenophobia and aptitude for organization are, as Eritreans never cease to explain, products of culture and historical experience more than they are of policy choices. Eritrea never had feudal structures, sheikhs, or warlords. Villages were commonly owned and were governed by councils, or *baitos*, of elders. "It was not a society deferential to individual authority," I was told by Yemane Ghebre Meskel, the director of President Afewerki's office, "so we didn't need Marxist ideology to achieve a high stage of communalism." Wolde-Ab Yisak, the president of the University of Asmara,

observed, "Communal self-reliance is our dogma, which in turn comes from the knowledge that we Eritreans are different from our neighbors." (On my flight out of Eritrea, I overheard a teenage Eritrean girl from the diaspora lecturing her younger siblings in American English about how "the Ethiopians murdered our people.")

A monument in downtown Asmara definitively symbolizes such self-reliance, collectivity, and rudimentary survival. The monument celebrates not an individual, or even a generic guerrilla fighter, but a giant pair of sandals—shedas, in the native Tigrinya language. Such sandals, worn by every Eritrean fighter during the long struggle with Ethiopia, were homemade from recycled tire rubber, and gave fighters the ability to move quickly in the stony desert war zone. The monument shows what mythic proportions the conflict with Ethiopia has achieved in the minds of Eritreans; it has come to supersede the power of religion itself, in a society split evenly between Islam and Orthodox Christianity. This is an impressive achievement on a continent where Muslims and Christians are forming increasingly antagonistic group identities.

Eritrea's clarified sense of nationhood, rare in a world of nation-states rent by tribalism and globalization, is in part a legacy of Italian colonialism. "We acknowledge that the legacy of colonialism was not all negative," says Yemane Ghebreab, the political-affairs officer of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice—successor to the country's guerrilla force, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. Having conquered Eritrea in the late nineteenth century, the Italians had by the late 1930s turned their new colony into one of the most highly industrialized places in Africa, with road and railway networks that united a people previously divided by mountains and deserts. To drive from Asmara to Massawa—a descent of more than 7,500 feet in only seventy miles, down tangled vertebrae of coppery-green peaks, on a road of never-ending switchbacks, bridges, and embankments, built by Mussolini in the mid-1930s and kept in excellent condition by Eritrean highway crews working seven days a week—is to experience the historical energy of the industrialized West transplanted successfully to an African nation.

Another benefit of Italian colonialism, according to Ghebre Meskel, was town planning. Rather than concentrate everything in Asmara, the Italians developed Massawa and similar towns so as to prevent the overcentralization that now plagues other developing countries. To stem migration into Asmara and preserve this legacy, the Eritrean government has tried to improve life in rural areas; thus Asmara is not surrounded by shantytowns that might breed political extremism.

Following the defeat of Fascist Italy in World War II, and the dissolution of its East African empire, the new United Nations voted to incorporate Eritrea into Ethiopia. The Eritreans, unhappy with this decision, finally revolted in 1961. For thirteen years Eritrean guerrillas fought an Ethiopia backed by the United States. In 1974, when Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown, leading to a Marxist regime headed by Mengistu Haile Mariam, Eritrean guerrilla activity did not cease, and from then on the Eritreans fought an Ethiopia backed by the Soviet Union. Despite their ability to grind away at a Soviet-supplied war machine, which featured MiG fighter jets in the air and Soviet generals on the battlefield, the secretive and independent-minded Eritreans received no aid under the Reagan Doctrine (a U.S. program for arming Third World anti-communist insurgencies). Nevertheless, in 1991 Eritrean and Tigrean guerrillas, fighting on separate fronts, defeated